WASHINGTON (UPI) — Raiding a tiny island under heavy fire from Cambodian troops, the Marines, Navy and Air Force freed the pirated freighter Mayaguez and its crew Thursday in a fierce battle to uphold American honor and “freedom of the seas.”

Pentagon officials said helicopters, dodging brutal small arms fire under cover of darkness, plucked what they hoped was the last of the 160-man Marine force from Koh Tang island in the Gulf of Thailand at 9:10 a.m. EDT.

But in the post-battle confusion, the officials said they could not be sure all the Marines and airmen from downed helicopters had been rescued and no firm casualty figures would be available before Friday.

Pentagon sources said it appeared the surprisingly tough Cambodian garrison — an estimated 100 to 400 men equipped only with machineguns, rifles and other small arms — killed at least one Marine and one airman, wounded “many” and shot down three helicopters and crippled two others during the 18-hour battle.

Pentagon officials confirmed one Marine was known to have died when he stepped on a mine and one airman was listed as “missing” from the crew of a downed helicopter.

The sources said tentative reports also suggested as many as 14 Americans — eight Marines and six airmen — might be missing, and two destroyers circled Koh Tang with loudspeakers searching for possible stragglers long after the Mayaguez and its 39 crewmen were back in American hands.

But Pentagon officials said the number of missing — any — would not be known until an accurate master could be taken of the evacuated assault forces.

They said some Marines were scattered among four departing warships, while others rode (Continued on Back Page, Col. 1)

S. Vietnamese Reds Ready To Open Ties With U.S.

SAIGON (AP) — A top official of the new South Vietnamese government said in a speech at a victory celebration in Saigon Thursday that his country is willing to open diplomatic relations with the United States.

Nguyen Huu Tho, chairman of the advisory council of the Provisional Revolutionary Government, told the celebration:

The FRG will open diplomatic, economic, cultural and friendship relations with all countries of the world provided those countries respect the sovereignty of our country and will not interfere in our internal affairs.”

He said the United States must “carry out its responsibilities as provided by the Paris agreement of 1973.” He did not elaborate on this point, but the FRG has been demanding that the United States recognize it as the government of South Vietnam and respect the sovereignty of Vietnam.

The United States closed its embassy — which was later bombed by Saigonese — a day before the FRG forces marched into Saigon. The United States has never reconvened the FRG as a government.

South Vietnam also informed the United States on Thursday that Algeria will take over the South Vietnamese Embassy in Washington and will represent the new Saigon regime there.

A diplomatic note sent to Washington said the Provisional Revolutionary Government is the “sole legal representative of the people of South Vietnam.” It continued: “The former Saigon government has been abolished, and its various agencies in the United States have lost their representation.”

“All the properties of these agencies, movable and real estate, such as vessels and documents, are now placed under the management of the Provisional Revolutionary Government.”

The communiqué said the FRG has given Algeria “the mission of representing it to take over and protect all properties, vessels and documents belonging (Continued on Back Page, Col. 4)
WASHINGTON (UPI)—Hours after completion of his historic international crisis, President Ford told the Shah of Iran in a welcoming ceremony Thursday that "the U.S. commitment to peace and progress for the world has remained firm."

A White House spokesman, meanwhile, said Ford told congressional leaders "I would never forgive myself" for not ordering an air strike on the Cambodian mainland if the U.S. Marine rescue of a pirated American merchant ship and her crew had failed.

Press Secretary Nessen said the President feared that, without an air strike, 2,000 communist troops stationed on the mainland might have been ferried to the island where the Marines landed.

Ford was unsmiling as he welcomed the Shah in an outdoor, 2,500-inhabitant ceremony at the White House. It was his first public appearance since announcing before dawn that the Marines had repatriated the freighter Mayaguez and rescued 400-man crew on his orders.

"The U.S. commitment to peace and progress for the world has remained firm, even while the world has changed," Ford told the Shah.

White House Press Secretary Ron Nessen later told reporters the President's military decision was an anguish one.

He said Ford offered an accompanying air strike at Roan airfield on the nearby Cambodian mainland to prevent the evacuation of nearly 200 men from some 2,000 communist troops on the island.

"I would never have forgiven myself" if the Cambodian troops had attacked the Marines, Ford told congressional leaders, according to Nessen.

The President said it would be too great a risk not to have this supernumerary action on the mainland." Nessen said.

The Shah, whom Ford called one of the world's "outer statesmen," arrived on the south grounds of the White House by helicopter from Williamsburg, Va. Ford and the Shah will conduct talks lasting to next week, centering on the international energy situation and high oil prices.

Allies Mum
—but Yanks Back Ford

WASHINGTON (UPI) — President Ford received overwhelming support from the American public for his limited military action in the Mayaguez incident but apparently no such backing from some governments, the White House said Thursday.

Press Secretary Ron Nessen said that in two and one-half days between the capture of the merchant vessel by Cambodian troops and the landing of the White House and its crew, the White House received 4,271 telegrams and 2,525 telephonic calls for strong action and approving the President's methods.

There were 520 written messages opposed to Ford's action and 33 "assorted comments," Nessen said.

Telephone calls to the White House in this period ran 1,976 in favor of Ford and 152 against.

Some 4,000 telegrams are stacked up and remain unsigned and unread, Nessen added.

Asked if any United States allies had commented on Ford's handling of the affair, Nessen said the State Department reported "no official messages received from any countries."
Mayaguez, Crew Free Marines Leave

(Continued From Page 1)

helicopters to Thailand enroute to Kow要

"It all jumbled up at this point," one officer said.

The Marines landed on Kow要 Wednesday as part of a

squadron of four helicopters and four 105mm howitzers, to

support the 500-man Marine force, Colonel John Wisenbaker, 

support from 61 fighters and fire from the five-inch guns of the 

destroyers Holt and Welden.

At 1:45 p.m., the Wilson saw the small boat approaching. 

Twelve minutes later, unaware of the significance of that 

boat, the 47-ton landing craft, Coral Sea, launched its 

helicopters and planes. By 2:20, the Marines were off the 

Mayaguez and headed for Kow要.

At 11:32 p.m., the situation suddenly changed into a large 

squadron of four helicopters and four 105mm howitzers, to

support the 500-man Marine force, Colonel John Wisenbaker,

who was commanding the Mayaguez.

The destroyers were the first to arrive. They approached the 

destroyers Holt and Welden.

By 7 p.m., a total of seven helicopters were in the air over 

the ThailandiHai and those in the third helicopter also

saw the Mayaguez crew had been released, the Wilson

had taken off and was on his way to the west coast.

By 8 p.m., a total of seven helicopters were in the air over 

the ThailandiHai and those in the third helicopter also

saw the Mayaguez crew had been released, the Wilson

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Temperatures

By United Press International

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<th>Temperature</th>
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Marines Flow Out of Thailand

It appeared the United States had determined to remove the 
embarrassment of the Marines before the Viet Cong delegation's 
arrival, U.S. sources said that

definition in South Vietnam.

Viets Ready for Ties

(Continued From Page 1)

VIENTIANE, Laos - Student demonstrators have threatened to disrupt the United Nations Peace Previsionsal Gov-
ernment in South Vietnam.

"We have to respond, beca-

cause otherwise the United

States will continue to do this

type of thing," Kruk told newsmen. "They are reviving

several options in dealing with

the Ford Administration's

call for peace talks which fail

to reach agreement.

Several thousand protesters, mostly student buffs, 
gathered at a demonstration in the United States and agreed

to try to negotiate the release of the Americans, who were seized

by the United States.

A U.S. Embassy source said

American students are likely
to carry out their death

threats, they are being taken se-

curely in the embassy.

The hostages included Sanford J.

J. Hsu, the United States' o fficial 

in general Laos.

Stone is from Cleveland, Ohio.

The U.S. State Department
called and asked about him with

him are Charles R. Peary, the 

Department's assistant director

of the State Department, and

Charles C. R. Harry, the

hostages to the American embassy, who are being held in the

U.S.-Vietnamese relations, have been reviewed,"

Foreign Ministry sources said

Robby's a Texan Now

RAYMONDVILLE, Tex. - 

"Rocky's a Texan Now"

Vice President Nelson Rockefell-

er now is an honorary citizen of the

south-Texas county of Will-

son. The county commissioners 

voted Rockefeller the honor, in

recognition of his recent pur-

chase of about 6,000 acres of a

ranch which is mostly in the

date Nguyen Thi Binh, foreign

affairs minister.

The celebration began at 7:30

a.m. under a light drizzle at the

presidential palace once occu-

pied by South Vietnamese Presi-

dent Nguyen Van Thieu.

The theme of the celebration

was to honor Ho Chi Minh, the

late leader of North Vietnam, A

picture of him was hung from

the front of the presidential

palace and could be seen from

blocks away. A giant re-

viewing stand was also built for

the occasion.

He died on Sept. 9, 1969, after

attending his government.

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late leader of North Vietnam, A

picture of him was hung from

the front of the presidential

palace and could be seen from

blocks away. A giant re-

viewing stand was also built for

the occasion.

On Wednesday the PRC

announced it had driven off an

installations left behind in Sai-

gon by the U.S. government in-

cluding the embassy and cons-

ulate buildings.

In a communique dealing

with real estate, the PRC said

all private properties, houses

and apartments abandoned by

the occupants are now under

the management of the PRC Com-

mittee of Land and Houses.

It placed a ban effective im-

mediately on all new construction

and said all real estate sales

must be approved and certified

by the land and houses com-

mittee.

It said buildings rented to

American firms and banks in

the Saigon government as billets